# THE WORK OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION IN POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA

GERALD S. HATCH

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# THE WORK OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION IN POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Graduate School of Florida Southern College

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Acknowledgement is also made of the editing services of Mrs. Anna May Schenck.

## DEDICATION

To my loving and faithful wife, Marie, who has sacrificed so much in order for this goal to be attained. Without her patience and understanding, the work could not have been accomplished.

# PREFACE

## OBJECTS OF

## PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.

To raise the standards of home life.

To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child.

To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Parent Teacher Association is recognized generally as an educational agency of considerable importance. In some sections of the country, an effective Parent Teacher Association is a requirement for standard school rating.

The new ideal of the democratic school system implies that the citizens of a community have the responsibility of not only financing the schools but also a part in determining the goals and objectives of education. Therefore, the citizens must have a thorough knowledge of school procedures and community needs. This necessary information can be brought to the public by means of the Parent Teacher Association.

The Parent Teacher Association movement is widespread, and its functions are generally understood. The letters "P.T.A." have a national significance and the organization now has a membership exceeding two million six hundred thousand.

It is probable that most teachers, during their professional careers, will have some association with this organization. To some of them this experience will be a pleasure and to others a nuisance. The experience depends greatly on the teacher's attitude and understanding of the purposes and procedures of the organization. A certain amount of instruction in the parent-teacher movement is an

essential part of teacher training.

Some of the highest rating colleges and universities in America offer special courses in the parent-teacher movement, presented by a parent-teacher leader or parent-teacher official. Unfortunately, there is a limited number of parent-teacher leaders, who have had the variety of experience with the Parent Teacher Association, essential for carrying on this work at the colleges.

Some educators consider the Parent Teacher Association strictly a parents' organization--or even a mothers' organization. They attend the regular meetings, render their services and pay dues, but they contend that the leadership should be in lay hands and that the parents should assume the dominant roles.

It is important that the Parent Teacher Association function not entirely as a lay organization and not exclusively as a professional one. Its chief value lies in the fact that the two elements are blended. This fact is clearly brought out in Cubberley's The Principal and His School.

It is largely because professional people have been willing to work with parents that this organization has achieved the importance and prestige it now enjoys. Nationally known experts in various fields, state and local officials, school administrators, rural supervisors, and classroom teachers, have all made their contribution to the pro-

essential work of teacher training.

Some of the leading colleges and universities in America first opened their doors in the [illegible] century, to [illegible] [illegible]. Before [illegible], there is a limited number of summer [illegible], who have had the training of experience with the Parent Teacher Association, essential for carrying on this work at the college.

Once established within the [illegible] Teacher Association [illegible] a [illegible] organization--by [illegible] [illegible]. Then attend the regular meetings, prepare their [illegible] and pay dues, for they control [illegible] [illegible] should be in the hands [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] the district [illegible].

It is [illegible] that the Parent Teacher Association [illegible] [illegible] is the [illegible] and not [illegible] itself as a [illegible] [illegible]. The chief [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the elements are [illegible]. This [illegible] [illegible] brought out in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

It is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] willing to work with [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

gress of the parent-teacher movement.

After ten years of experience in the public schools of Florida, it has been determined by the writer that the work of the Parent Teacher Association can be a real educational part of the school system.

# CHAPTER I

## SETTING THE PROBLEM

### The Problem

#### General Statement

The purpose of this study is first to examine and record facts concerning the work of the various Parent Teacher Association organizations in Polk County, Florida, and secondly, to tabulate these facts so that the work of these organizations can be appraised.

#### Specific Problems

1. To record the principle historical factors that have led to the wide use of the Parent Teacher Association, and to describe several outstanding accomplishments of the several Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County, Florida.

2. To examine, by means of a questionnaire and personal interviews, the attitudes of the school administrator and lay members, concerning the Parent Teacher Association.

3. To attempt to discover any problems that might exist between school authorities and lay members, and to set forth practical solutions to the problems.

4. To appraise the nature and the success of the accomplishments of the Parent Teacher Association.

# Chapter I

## Statement of Problem

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to attempt to evaluate and modify the curriculum for Unit of Practice Present Teacher Education organizations in Ville Chapin, Florida, and especially, to indicate those items to which the needs of these organizations may be attributed.

### Specific Objectives

1. To record the principle difficulties that have risen in the wide use of the Plavan Technique Approach, and to classify several principal causes in Ville-Chapin, Florida.

2. To evaluate, by means of a questionnaire and personal interview, the efficiency of the present curriculum and organization, concerning the Present Teacher Education Program.

3. To attempt to discover any problems that might exist between individuals and the schools, and to set forth possible solutions to the difficulties.

4. To recommend changes in the curriculum.

## Definition of Terms

Parent Teacher Association--Throughout this study, this term will refer only to an organized group of parents and teachers which has met the organizational requirements of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and are affiliated with them.

Faculty--This term will include teachers and personnel actually employed to teach pupils.

Lay Members--Refers to those persons belonging to the Parent Teacher Association, who are not professional school people.

Administrators--Includes those people, such as principals, supervisors and others, who hold executive positions within the school system.

## Delimitations

This study will be limited to the work of the various Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County, Florida. Information obtained from other school systems will be used in comparisons only.

## Basic Assumption

It is assumed that the work of the Parent Teacher Associations is of value and does have a place in the educational systems of America and more especially in Polk County, Florida.

Basic Hypothesis

There are several Parent Teacher Associations working in Polk County, but there are still problems of management and school-community relationships that are unsolved. These problems might be successfully solved by this organization.

Incidence of the Problem

For the past ten years, the writer has served in the public schools of Florida. Most of these years were spent as a school administrator and as an officer in the local Parent Teacher Association unit, thus affording the writer almost daily contact with the work and problems of the Parent Teacher Association. Insight into both sides of the work that was being carried on by the Association was secured.

It was found that in most instances, the work of the Parent Teacher Association was beneficial and under proper guidance, the principal of a school could make it a real educational part of the school system.

It was also observed that the Parent Teacher Association could do many things of a financial nature, that the local school board could not afford to do; however, the reverse could be true and the influence of the Parent Teacher Association would become a negative influence and their intended values greatly decreased.

It will be endeavored to locate the problems that exist

today between the Parent Teacher Association and the public school and to attempt to bring about a closer coordination of their work.

An attempt will be made to show the dynamic possibilities of the educational accomplishments that could be obtained if both the school and the Parent Teacher Association understand each other and were cognizant of each others problems. Thus, the influences of each would not conflict and each would be able to help the other to obtain a better program for the mutual benefit of the educational system as a whole.

Procedure in Collecting and Treating Data

The problem was approached as a normative survey of the work of the Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County, with particular emphasis upon the cultural and educational values that are obtained by our school system through the efforts of the Parent Teacher Association. This study attempts to gain a prospective of the work of the Parent Teacher Association through a cross section of conditions exisitng outside of Polk County, Florida. In addition, comparisons that are taking place will be studied.

The subject was approached by a series of questionnaires; one was sent to each school principal and one to the president of each Parent Teacher Association in Polk County, Florida.

Various of these were followed up with personal interviews with the presidents or secretaries of the Parent Teacher Associations.

The data received by questionnaire and interview were recorded, and the work of the Parent Teacher Organizations of Polk County, Florida, appraised.

## CHAPTER II

## THE HISTORICAL RISE OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The rise, organization and development of the Parent Teacher Association had its commencement in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The earliest groups that met, which resembled the type of Parent Teacher Association known today, began as small groups of mothers who met regularly under their own leadership. Their purpose in meeting was to discuss experiences in child care and child education, and to put themselves in contact with the various sources of information and guidance available at the time.

Early in the 1890's, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, (now the American Association of University Women), began a scientific study of the children of college-educated parents. Although this movement had little to do with the organization of the Parent Teacher Association, it did show the trend of the American mind in that some study of children's problems and parent education was on the way.

These small groups of informal but resolute mothers, with the aid of professional educators, clergymen, and statesmen, were the chief factors in the Parent Teacher movement. These people who envisioned a more intelligent and effective parenthood, and who saw a need for closer cooperation between

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the home and the school founded two national organizations: the Child Study Association of America and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

The Parent Teacher Association came into being at the same time and place as the National Congress of Mothers. This group held its first meeting in Washington, D. C., on February 17, 1897. From this meeting evolved the organization and foundation of the National Congress of Mothers and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. At this meeting was assembled a large delegation of parents, educators, clergymen and statesmen whose purpose it was to discuss and formulate plans for the betterment of child life. Mrs. Theodore W. Briney, instrumental in first calling the group together, asserted that she would be very happy and well pleased with her work if fifty people would attend the organizational meeting.[1] On the opening day, she was greeted by over two thousand enthusiastic people ready to go to work.

Mrs. Phoebe A. Hurst and Mrs. Theodore W. Briney are recognized as the co-founders of the organization. As the work of organizing the National Congress of Mothers progressed, it was brought out that there must be more cooperation between parents and teachers. For this reason, the new organization, the National Congress of Mothers, took upon

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1. Jerome Ellison, "Five Million Parents Can't be Stopped," The Saturday Evening Post, February 26, 1949, p. 49.

themselves the organization of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Mrs. Theodore W. Briney became the first national president of the National Congress of Mothers and this group assumed the task of organizing the Parent Teacher Associations on a national scale.

The first local units organized by the National Congress of Mothers devoted a major portion of their time to child study. In 1901, the Congress of Mothers began to urge parents to study the curricula of the schools which their children attended. In 1906, the Congress of Mothers published reading courses which were recommended for both fathers and mothers.

The work of the national organization grew rapidly and in 1903, a committee on juvenile court and probation was formed for the purpose of studying and recommending a better method of care for delinquent, defective and dependent children. The congress at this time passed a resolution advocating regular courses of instruction for the training of probation officers and all other people placed in charge of these needy children.

In 1911, according to the report of the president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the congress inaugurated a national movement toward the establishment of mothers' pensions. During the same year, important progress was made in securing a child hygiene department in every

State Board of Health. In 1915, the Congress of Parents and Teachers went on record as opposing the consolidation of juvenile courts with those of regular courts. In 1919, they appointed a committee to investigate the problem and study the advisability of having the supervision of all delinquent children under the supervision of school authorities.

The year 1924 marked an important step in the protection of neglected children by the adoption of an important general resolution:

> "Whereas, the protection and care of neglected children is one of the highest duties of any state, and whereas, in some states the juvenile courts are still undeveloped or inadequately equipped; therefore be it Resolved: That the associations of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in each state be urged to study their juvenile court laws and methods of procedure; and that they work to promote a high standard of such service, which includes separate hearings of children's cases, adequate detention facilities, investigation and supervision of skilled workers, provision for physical and mental examination of girls by women, and the elimination of all unnecessary publicity."[2]

From the above resolution it can be seen readily how the committee on legislation has advanced to become a highly functional organization. The legislative committee is now specialized in many branches of legislation necessary in the complex work of their field of endeavor. This committee has also supported much needed legislation, one in particular, the passing of the Pure Food and Drug Act. They also drew

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2. White House Conference on The Family and Parent Education, p. 65.

resolution:

up most of the measures that were initiated to combat the many evils and undesirable features of child labor under the old factory system.

By 1924, the Parent Teacher Association had increased to the extent that there were organizations in every state in the union with the exception of the State of Nevada. However, today there is a state organization in every state and in most of America's possessions, including Alaska, Panama Canal Zone, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Hawaii. Today the National Congress of Parents and Teachers has a total membership that well exceeds five million men and women from all walks of life, from all races and all creeds, as the only requirements for membership are an interest and a genuine desire to be of service to children and their education. There are also some thirty-one thousand local units that today are increasing at the rate of two thousand per year. However, about five hundred local organizations close up each year, for one reason or another, and must be subtracted from the last total. Most of these organizations close because the schools are being consolidated. A few close for lack of interest or for political reasons.

The individual membership of the Parent Teacher Association has increased more than one hundred fifty percent in the past nine years--from a combined membership of a small fraction over two million in 1940, to over five million in 1949.

Under the leadership of the present national president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Mrs. L. W. Hughes, the national congress has increased some 1,864,252 persons during her three year administration. The latest project is waged against unwholesome comic books, moving pictures and radio programs. She maintains that since the organization which she represents is pledged to child welfare, that they should do everything in their power to combat and solve this problem.

The work of the Parent Teacher Association has far surpassed even the widest hopes of many enthusiastic organizers. It is well recognized that the Parent Teacher Association has won its right, and proved its ability and usefullness in the intricate educational system in operation today.

Some projects are national in scope, being participated in by all conscientious locals. The Summer Roundup of the Children, aims to send youngsters to school each fall completely free of remediable physical defects. The hot-lunch program--another national project--was started during the depression, when the malnutrition of children caused general alarm.

Parent Teacher Association projects have never been adequately catalogued; their number and variety are such that they hardly could be. But, conducting projects is not the only enterprise, or even the most important undertaking of

this organization. It regards as its main function the teaching of parents to be better parents.

The Parent Teacher Association is old enough now to have certain traditions. One of the more curious and interesting of these is in regard to politics. The official line is that the Parent Teacher Association avoids politics, and never interferes with school administration, but of course this is nonsense, as everyone knows that a really live Parent Teacher Association is "up to its ears" in politics, and directly concerned with school administration.

One may be justified in saying that the Parent Teacher Association movement was founded on the fact that whenever two or more mothers gather together, the discussion is concerned primarily with children.

The parent-teacher movement began in Florida in the period between 1920 and 1923. The events leading up to the organization of a Florida branch of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent Teacher Associations, date back to about 1889, when the East Jacksonville Mothers Club was formed with Mrs. Henry Cooper as president.[3]

In 1903, Mrs. Wellington W. Cummer called a meeting and organized a general Mothers Club in Jacksonville. How-

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3. Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers, Lest We Forget, p. 16.

ever, after a few years, this organization ceased to exist. In 1913, the Duval County Federation of Mothers' Clubs was formed with eight associations that varied in name from mothers' clubs to improvement associations.

The first convention of the Florida Branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, was held in the Seminole Hotel in Jacksonville, on March 11, 1921. There is no record that can be found to show that Polk County was represented at this meeting.

The year 1922 is important to the Florida Branch of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent Teacher Association, because in that year Florida formally took her place with forty-four other states to work toward the goals of the National Congress.[4]

In 1926, the Florida Congress held its annual convention in Miami. At this time, there was reported a membership of 7,914, in 150 local associations. At this time, Mrs. A. F. Fanger was elected state president; during her year of office, she found time to organize the Colored Congress of Parents and Teachers in Florida. It was during Mrs. Fanger's presidency that the Florida Parent Teacher magazine made its appearance. The state bulletin was established in 1928, and was to be issued quarterly.

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4. Loc. cit.

By 1939, the Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers had increased to 385 associations with 26,570 members, including twenty-five "Superior" associations. It was in this year that Florida was the only other state besides Texas which did not report a loss in membership.

The University of Florida held the first training course for the Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers in 1925. In 1934 and 1935, short courses were held both at the University of Florida and at Florida State College for Women (now Florida State University).

In 1939, short courses featured Dean Ray V. Sowers of Florida Southern College as chief instructor of character education. The theme of the course was, "Living and Learning in Our Democracy."

Today the Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers can be measured by increased activity and by expanded programs plus a membership that boasts 134,240 members in 612 local units. In the past two years, the membership has increased some 30,000 persons, who have realized the importance of the work of this organization.

The history of the local units of the Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County is very vague.[5] The information

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5. The Scrap Book compiled by the various Presidents of the Polk County Council of Parents and Teachers, unpublished, constitutes the chief source of historical information.

found could not possibly be considered authentic. Many of the earlier organizations at one time or another ceased for periods of one or more years and consequently records were lost. It may be assumed that there have been local units of the Parent Teacher Association in Polk County for more than thirty years.

The Polk County Council of Parents and Teachers was formed thirteen years ago, under the direction of Mrs. Paul Delaven of Dade City, Florida, who at that time was the State Extension Director of the Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers.

The organizational meeting was held in February at the First Presbyterian Church. Mrs. C. A. Burkhaulter presided during the opening exercises and Mrs. Paul Delaven conducted the business session. Mrs. Ray V. Sowers was elected the first president, to serve for a term of two years. Other officers were: Vice-president, Mrs. Paul F. Collins, Haines City; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Lloyd Fresbie, Bartow; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Bernhard P. Reinsch, Lakeland, and Treasurer, Mrs. Ted S. John, Winter Haven.

The year 1937 found the county council composed of twenty-one local units with a combined membership of 1,464 individuals. Also, in 1937, the county council sponsored a series of weekly broadcasts over radio station W.L.A.K.

Routine procedures seemed to take place up until the be-

ginning of World War II, when operations were curtailed, institutes for the time were suspended, and conventions were held to a minimum or not held at all.

Between the years 1942 and 1945, there was a decrease in local units from twenty-two to nineteen; however, over the same period of time there was an increase in membership from 2,396 to 2,934.

Since 1945, more local units have been established and the overall membership has increased. In 1948, only a handful of members represented Polk County at the leadership-training conference in Tallahassee; however, in 1949, the Polk County Council chartered a greyhound bus and a delegation of thirty-five journeyed to Tallahassee for the four-day training conference.

## CHAPTER III

## NEGATIVE INFLUENCES OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Parent Teacher Association, like all other organizations, does have its faults. From the survey made in Polk County, the fault does not lie in the organization but in the leadership and members of the association itself.

It is not the intention here to accuse the whole organization for the few mistakes made by a small minority of its members, or the actions of some isolated local organization that has not yet achieved the true spirit and ideal of the work that the Parent Teacher Association is carrying on throughout the United States and its territorial possessions.

From the questionnaire sent out to school administrators, an attempt was made to discover what they thought was wrong, if anything, with the work of the local Parent Teacher Association. The question involved was, "Do you feel that at times the Parent Teacher Association has a negative influence?" The administrators responded thirty-three to thirteen that there was no negative influence. However, five of the administrators who responded negative, made comments to the effect that they believed there were negative influences in other systems, or that they had read of definite negative influences; but,

they had never experienced these situations among their own organizations.

Only four (out of forty-five administrators) felt that the work of the Parent Teacher Association, in their school, was worth the effort. It was observed from a further examination of these questionnaires that in one of the schools there was no Parent Teacher Association. Many asserted that if they did not already have an association, they would not instigate a new one. It was felt unanimously that the Parent Teacher Association did not have any educational values, and most of them had the idea that petty politics played too large a part in the activities of the association.

Most of the administrators felt that the association made an imposition on the time of both pupils and teachers. One comment was made to the effect that Parent Teacher Associations are helpful institutions as long as they stayed within their by-laws; however, when they overstep these bounds, they not only defeat the purpose of the Parent Teacher Association, but hinder the normal progress of the school. At some past time, these administrators must have had disagreeable experiences with the members of their organizations and it is believed that had there been more pleasant experiences, their reactions would have been as the majority, favorable, and well pleased with the efforts and contributions of the Parent Teacher Association.

The next criticism came from a small minority of the administrators, as only six felt that the Parent Teacher Association imposed upon pupils' time. However, when asked about imposing on teachers' time, eighteen felt that the teachers were misused and their time was imposed upon to a great degree. One interesting comment was: "We as teachers are not imposed upon, we give our time freely for the cause of education."[1]

The greatest negative influence, from the viewpoint of the administration in Polk County, or the Parent Teacher Associations, is the part they play in petty politics. From the answers concerning this question of petty politics, twenty-one answered yes, that the organization did participate in petty politics, and twenty voted that they did not; two voted very little, and one undecided.

The most surprising factor concerning the question of petty politics was that most of those who voted no qualified their vote with the following or some similar statement: "Not in our school, but I have been in schools or have read of such instances where such cases do exist--or they would, if they could get by with it." Such statements as these lead one to believe that there are more petty politics than necessary. Many affirmative replies were qualified by statements to the

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1. Since the questionnaire was of a confidential nature, the name of the official completing it is held in strictest confidence.

effect that petty politics were not engaged in by the organization itself, but by the various members who have been allowed to do so under lax or improper leadership. In many instances it was averred that such conditions would not exist if the proper leaders were chosen and the proper guidance and motivation put into action.

In some sections of the country many Parent Teacher Associations sponsor field trips for students. However, from the questionnaire that was sent out in Polk County, this method of enriching the program is used very little or not at all. Some of the principals seemed to feel that the reason was that the Parent Teacher Association had not been approached. The need for field trips is taken care of by the Polk County School Board, as teachers are permitted to use school buses to make trips within school hours, provided a regular bus driver is available to drive the bus. This program has possibilities and with additional help from the Parent Teacher Association, field trips could well become an interesting part of the educational program.

The opportunities for cultural activities, for the benefit of the lay members, of the Parent Teacher Association is almost unlimited. Among the most used methods of advancing the cultural status of its members is through the establishment of home life courses and family life institutes.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers recognizes

the fact that the environment of the home has the greatest bearing on the child's development and that the improvement of home environment is one of the major projects undertaken by the local Parent Teacher Association. This can be accomplished by home life courses directed to child care, sanitation, cooking, and health education.

There is no field of endeavor that has been so widely publicized as the health program that is carried on by the National Congress. Several states have carried on a project of mass x-ray examinations for tuberculosis in an effort to help control that disease.

Many local organizations have also carried on citizen education and they have done a great deal to establish the idea that a democratic family is the cradle of democracy, both on a national and ecumenical scale. The National Parent Teacher has recently devoted much space to the encouragement of the family council, by means of which boys and girls can learn at home what they need to know as active members of the community.

The Parent Teacher Association believes that a well-balanced spiritual life is a necessity; one that requires constant attention and constant emphasis. They are accomplishing this ideal by close cooperation with the various religious organizations in the community. The organization also spends considerable effort in character building of youth. This work

is in progress by means of projects in personality, which consist of several sessions in which character building occupations and accomplishments are featured.

Every community, however large or small, has cultural backgrounds and assets that are peculiarly its own. The Parent Teacher Association can make itself responsible for helping to preserve these native elements. One southwestern state, that has a cosmopolitan population, sponsors an annual Fair of Nations in which the customs of the various native cultures are featured.

It is rather difficult to give a true picture of the cultural value of the Parent Teacher Association in Polk County, because from over thirty questionnaires sent out to the presidents of the Parent Teacher Associations, only seven completed questionnaires were returned, and one of these was not filled out as a note written at the bottom of the page indicated that the local organization has been disbanded. However, from the answers received on the remaining six questionnaires, only one organization spends any money at all to train lay leaders to conduct parent education. The group which does spend some money sends its president to a National Congress institute.

From the information obtained by the questionnaires, none of the Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County sponsor a family life council. However, one group felt that they had

made a step toward a family life council as they had studied about one in their study course.

Another question of interest was to find out if the Parent Teacher Association made provision in its budget for parent education. Four answered in the affirmative, one negative, and one stated that several magazines were subscribed to for parent use and that they also paid for the study courses used as a part of the regular meetings.

It was observed through the questionnaires that none of the six associations spent any money to improve health conditions in the community. One group felt that there was no need for them to spend any money as the county board furnished a school nurse. It was also observed that only one of the six associations sponsored field trips for children.

The question concerning the financial contributions of the Parent Teacher Associations was answered as follows: thirty-seven answered that they did aid the school program financially. However, three administrators stated that they believed their associations could and should contribute more than they were doing at the present time. From the data received from the questionnaires sent to the presidents of the Parent Teacher Associations, one stated that in the past year they had not aided the school program financially. They felt that as their organization had been in operation less than a year, and since they had reorganized an association which had

had failed, that all their time and effort was needed to arouse the interest of the parents. Therefore, the task of raising any funds, other than dues, had been put aside until the following year.

The greatest contributions that have been made in Polk County by the Parent Teacher Associations seem to have been made by financial and material contributions. In the past five years one of the associations in this county has built and furnished a lunch room that serves over three hundred meals per day. Other various organizations have purchased audio-visual aids which include movie projectors, film strips, maps, picture files, books, bulletin boards, black-out curtains, and many other useful items. Some Associations have taken on beautification projects, a very worthwhile activity, as beautiful grounds add tremendously to the appearance and atmosphere of the general surroundings. Other organizations have bought very useful articles for the schools, such as water coolers, fans, and even air conditioning systems.

Some of the projects sponsored by local Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County that are strictly financial are: the summer roundup of pre-school children and summer work shops.

The summer roundup of pre-school children, of course, takes place in all schools and in some instances is a joint project taken on by both the school and the local Parent Teacher Association.

One group holds a work shop in junior home economics each year during the summer vacation. Another group organized and promoted the school glee club.

Such projects as adult education, child guidance and active legislation committees seem to be sadly lacking in Polk County. Only one of the associations appeared to have a desire to have a family life council. These shortcomings may be eliminated as the Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County become older and more experienced. Since the national trend is toward larger and more active Parent Teacher Associations, Polk County's Associations may fall in line and become a more active and valuable instrument in the field of education.

## CHAPTER IV

## CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCES OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The first question to be asked is: "How has the Parent Teacher Association helped the schools of America?" And, going a step further, "How can it help more in the future?"

One important fact to be remembered is that the organization dealt with has more than five million members and that new local organizations are increasing at the rate of two thousand per year. These members all joined willingly; they believe that the school is an important institution; they are all interested in the education of their children, and want to help.

Many members, however, do not help primarily because they do not know what to do. Of course, a few are merely joiners and only want their names on the roll. Many of the leaders have not taken the time or effort to inform them what to do. This situation can be kept well in hand by the use of the national magazine, National Parent Teacher, published ten months of the year.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers also publish many bulletins and leaflets that may influence the alert leader and lay member to a more thoughtful course of action.

These publications usually influence those who are ready

for action and want to be more than just organizations in name only.

The Parent Teacher Association is the only organization in America today that makes "inclusiveness" an important consideration in the selection of its membership. Because it recognizes no social barriers, the Parent Teacher Association is able to bridge the gap that keeps some of our communities from achieving true unity of effort. The parents have a sense of belonging to the school and teachers a means of belonging to the community; this gives the children an opportunity for early participation in the life of the world that they will some day control.

The local organization of the Parent Teacher Association may do many things that add to the cultural value of the school, both from the standpoint of the pupil and of the teacher, since one of the main functions of the organization is to foster closer unity between the teacher and community. The Parent Teacher Association has a great opportunity in bringing the community to the teacher. Here the parents and teachers may become better acquainted through social gatherings and the teachers may be brought to feel that they belong in the community.

One instance is recalled where the members of the faculty and the lay members of the Parent Teacher Association combine forces at least once each year and put on a play.

It is agreed that no better way for people to get to know each other is known than by going through the trials and tribulations of producing a play.

During the interviews the administrators were asked the following question: "Do you think that Parent-Teacher plays have any cultural value?" They all agreed that they were of cultural value to both teachers and parents; however, about half of them felt that it would impose too much on the teachers' time. The others felt that the demand on time was over balanced by the fact that many teachers enjoy a deviation from their work and would not look upon it as an imposition but welcome the change in their activities.

Many Parent Teacher Associations sponsor a reception to welcome new teachers and the return of the old teachers into the community. These have a cultural value but there is the question of the lasting value of such meetings. However, if these social gatherings could take place three or four times a year, the benefit derived would probably have a more lasting value.

The contribution that the Parent Teacher Association makes to the child usually comes from a different angle and in action is much more indirect. The Parent Teacher Association may furnish library material and in many instances the actual services of purchasing books and other materials. In

some instances, the mothers participate by coming into the schools to help check out materials and to do the work of a librarian.

Here in Polk County several of the Parent Teacher Associations have purchased radios, movie projectors, film strips and film-strip machines, opac projectors, and other materials that can be used by the teacher to broaden the scope and enrich the educational program.

# CHAPTER V

## OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS AND HOW OTHERS HAVE MET THEM

This chapter is opened with a quotation from Mr. E. P. Cubberley's The Principal and His School, because it so adequately bears out the findings about troublesome Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County.

> "The trouble with so many troublesome so-called Parent Teacher Associations is that they are not Parent Teacher Associations at all, but merely Parents' Associations. Too often the parents desire to meet and cooperate, but the teachers, feeling that they have done their fair share of school work for the day, do not remain, and in consequence neglect their best opportunity to meet and know the parents of their children. They likewise neglect an important opportunity to help shape their thinking and their opinion of the school. . . . Far too often a few over-zealous persons, lacking real knowledge, turn critic of the existing conditions and those responsible for them, and set up new goals for education that are both undesirable and unattainable."[1]

A situation, such as the above quotation implies, can exist very easily if the school principal is not alert enough to tactfully avert the situation. Most administrators feel that a large part of the trouble of Parent Teacher Associations is due to poor leadership. This usually comes about by a poor selection of officers and a lack of coopera-

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1. E. P. Cubberley, The Principal and His School, p. 551.

[illegible]

[illegible] Chamber [illegible] Commerce [illegible] Club [illegible] Board [illegible] Trade [illegible] Association [illegible] Bond [illegible] Exchange [illegible] Stock [illegible] Commodity [illegible] Grain [illegible] Cotton [illegible] Produce [illegible] Merchants' [illegible] Manufacturers' [illegible] Retail [illegible] Wholesale [illegible] Jobbers' [illegible] Dealers' [illegible] Trade [illegible] Labor [illegible] Union [illegible] Federation [illegible] Brotherhood [illegible] Order [illegible] Society [illegible] Lodge [illegible] Fraternity [illegible] Sorority [illegible] Alumni [illegible] Veterans' [illegible] Auxiliary [illegible] Post [illegible] Camp [illegible] Chapter [illegible] Council [illegible] Assembly [illegible] Congress [illegible] Convention [illegible] Meeting [illegible] Conference [illegible] Forum [illegible] Symposium [illegible] Seminar [illegible] Workshop [illegible] Institute [illegible] Academy [illegible] College [illegible] University [illegible] School [illegible] Library [illegible] Museum [illegible] Gallery [illegible] Theater [illegible] Opera [illegible] Concert [illegible] Hall [illegible] Auditorium [illegible] Stadium [illegible] Arena [illegible] Park [illegible] Garden [illegible] Zoo [illegible] Aquarium [illegible] Planetarium [illegible] Observatory [illegible] Laboratory [illegible] Hospital [illegible] Clinic [illegible] Dispensary [illegible] Infirmary [illegible] Asylum [illegible] Home [illegible] Shelter [illegible] Mission [illegible] Church [illegible] Temple [illegible] Synagogue [illegible] Mosque [illegible] Cathedral [illegible] Chapel [illegible] Monastery [illegible] Convent [illegible] Seminary [illegible] Rectory [illegible] Parsonage [illegible] Manse [illegible] Vicarage [illegible] Deanery [illegible] Archdeaconry [illegible] Bishopric [illegible] Diocese [illegible] Archdiocese [illegible] Province [illegible] Synod [illegible] Presbytery [illegible] Consistory [illegible] Tribunal [illegible] Court [illegible] Judiciary [illegible] Legislature [illegible] Parliament [illegible] Senate [illegible] House [illegible] Representatives [illegible] Assembly [illegible] Congress [illegible] Council [illegible] Commission [illegible] Committee [illegible] Subcommittee [illegible] Board [illegible] Bureau [illegible] Department [illegible] Ministry [illegible] Agency [illegible] Office [illegible] Service [illegible] Corps [illegible] Force [illegible] Army [illegible] Navy [illegible] Air [illegible] Marine [illegible] Coast [illegible] Guard [illegible] Militia [illegible] Reserve [illegible] National [illegible] Guard [illegible] Police [illegible] Constabulary [illegible] Gendarmerie [illegible] Fire [illegible] Department [illegible] Brigade [illegible] Company [illegible] Squad [illegible] Unit [illegible] Detachment [illegible] Platoon [illegible] Regiment [illegible] Battalion [illegible] Division [illegible] Corps [illegible] Army [illegible] Fleet [illegible] Squadron [illegible] Flotilla [illegible] Armada [illegible] Navy [illegible] Air [illegible] Force [illegible] Wing [illegible] Group [illegible] Squadron [illegible] Flight [illegible] Section [illegible] Element [illegible] Crew [illegible] Team [illegible] Band [illegible] Orchestra [illegible] Choir [illegible] Chorus [illegible] Ensemble [illegible] Troupe [illegible] Company [illegible] Cast [illegible] Staff [illegible] Faculty [illegible] Student [illegible] Body [illegible] Association [illegible] Union [illegible] Federation [illegible] Confederation [illegible] League [illegible] Alliance [illegible] Coalition [illegible] Pact [illegible] Treaty [illegible] Agreement [illegible] Contract [illegible] Deed [illegible] Charter [illegible] Constitution [illegible] Bylaws [illegible] Rules [illegible] Regulations [illegible] Code [illegible] Statute [illegible] Ordinance [illegible] Law [illegible] Act [illegible] Bill [illegible] Resolution [illegible] Motion [illegible] Amendment [illegible] Proposal [illegible] Petition [illegible] Application [illegible] Request [illegible] Order [illegible] Writ [illegible] Warrant [illegible] Subpoena [illegible] Summons [illegible] Notice [illegible] Decree [illegible] Judgment [illegible] Verdict [illegible] Sentence [illegible] Penalty [illegible] Fine [illegible] Tax [illegible] Duty [illegible] Tariff [illegible] Toll [illegible] Fee [illegible] Charge [illegible] Rate [illegible] Price [illegible] Cost [illegible] Expense [illegible] Budget [illegible] Appropriation [illegible] Allocation [illegible] Grant [illegible] Subsidy [illegible] Loan [illegible] Credit [illegible] Debt [illegible] Bond [illegible] Stock [illegible] Share [illegible] Dividend [illegible] Interest [illegible] Profit [illegible] Loss [illegible] Balance [illegible] Account [illegible] Ledger [illegible] Journal [illegible] Record [illegible] Report [illegible] Statement [illegible] Summary [illegible] Abstract [illegible] Digest [illegible] Index [illegible] Table [illegible] Chart [illegible] Graph [illegible] Diagram [illegible] Map [illegible] Plan [illegible] Design [illegible] Model [illegible] Prototype [illegible] Sample [illegible] Specimen [illegible] Example [illegible] Instance [illegible] Case [illegible] Fact [illegible] Datum [illegible] Information [illegible] Knowledge [illegible] Wisdom [illegible] Truth [illegible] Reality [illegible] Existence [illegible] Being [illegible] Life [illegible] Death [illegible] Birth [illegible] Marriage [illegible] Divorce [illegible] Adoption [illegible] Inheritance [illegible] Will [illegible] Testament [illegible] Codicil [illegible] Trust [illegible] Estate [illegible] Property [illegible] Land [illegible] Real [illegible] Estate [illegible] Personal [illegible] Property [illegible] Goods [illegible] Chattels [illegible] Effects [illegible] Belongings [illegible] Possessions [illegible] Assets [illegible] Liabilities [illegible] Net [illegible] Worth [illegible] Value [illegible] Price [illegible] Cost [illegible] Expense [illegible] Income [illegible] Revenue [illegible] Earnings [illegible] Wages [illegible] Salary [illegible] Pay [illegible] Compensation [illegible] Benefits [illegible] Pension [illegible] Annuity [illegible] Insurance [illegible] Policy [illegible] Premium [illegible] Claim [illegible] Settlement [illegible] Payment [illegible] Receipt [illegible] Invoice [illegible] Bill [illegible] Statement [illegible] Account [illegible] Balance [illegible] Due [illegible] Overdue [illegible] Paid [illegible] Unpaid [illegible] Credit [illegible] Debit [illegible] Transaction [illegible] Exchange [illegible] Trade [illegible] Barter [illegible] Sale [illegible] Purchase [illegible] Buy [illegible] Sell [illegible] Order [illegible] Delivery [illegible] Shipment [illegible] Freight [illegible] Cargo [illegible] Load [illegible] Unload [illegible] Transport [illegible] Carriage [illegible] Conveyance [illegible] Vehicle [illegible] Car [illegible] Truck [illegible] Bus [illegible] Train [illegible] Locomotive [illegible] Engine [illegible] Boat [illegible] Ship [illegible] Vessel [illegible] Barge [illegible] Tug [illegible] Yacht [illegible] Canoe [illegible] Kayak [illegible] Raft [illegible] Airplane [illegible] Aircraft [illegible] Helicopter [illegible] Glider [illegible] Balloon [illegible] Airship [illegible] Rocket [illegible] Spacecraft [illegible] Satellite [illegible] Probe [illegible] Capsule [illegible] Module [illegible] Station [illegible] Base [illegible] Port [illegible] Harbor [illegible] Dock [illegible] Pier [illegible] Wharf [illegible] Quay [illegible] Jetty [illegible] Breakwater [illegible] Lighthouse [illegible] Beacon [illegible] Buoy [illegible] Channel [illegible] Canal [illegible] River [illegible] Lake [illegible] Ocean [illegible] Sea [illegible] Gulf [illegible] Bay [illegible] Strait [illegible] Island [illegible] Peninsula [illegible] Continent [illegible] Country [illegible] Nation [illegible] State [illegible] Province [illegible] Territory [illegible] Region [illegible] Area [illegible] Zone [illegible] District [illegible] County [illegible] Parish [illegible] Township [illegible] Municipality [illegible] City [illegible] Town [illegible] Village [illegible] Hamlet [illegible] Settlement [illegible] Community [illegible] Neighborhood [illegible] Suburb [illegible] Downtown [illegible] Uptown [illegible] Midtown [illegible] Center [illegible] Core [illegible] Heart [illegible] Hub [illegible] Focus [illegible] Point [illegible] Place [illegible] Location [illegible] Site [illegible] Position [illegible] Address [illegible] Number [illegible] Street [illegible] Road [illegible] Avenue [illegible] Boulevard [illegible] Drive [illegible] Lane [illegible] Way [illegible] Path [illegible] Trail [illegible] Route [illegible] Highway [illegible] Freeway [illegible] Expressway [illegible] Turnpike [illegible] Toll [illegible] Road [illegible] Bridge [illegible] Tunnel [illegible] Overpass [illegible] Underpass [illegible] Interchange [illegible] Intersection [illegible] Crossing [illegible] Junction [illegible] Fork [illegible] Branch [illegible] Turn [illegible] Curve [illegible] Bend [illegible] Loop [illegible] Circle [illegible] Roundabout [illegible] Traffic [illegible] Light [illegible] Signal [illegible] Sign [illegible] Marker [illegible] Milestone [illegible] Guidepost [illegible] Boundary [illegible] Border [illegible] Frontier [illegible] Line [illegible] Limit [illegible] Edge [illegible] Margin [illegible] Fringe [illegible] Periphery [illegible] Outskirts [illegible] Suburbs [illegible] Environs [illegible] Vicinity [illegible] Neighborhood [illegible] Area [illegible] Region [illegible] Zone [illegible] Sector [illegible] Quarter [illegible] Ward [illegible] Precinct [illegible] District [illegible] Division [illegible] Section [illegible] Part [illegible] Portion [illegible] Piece [illegible] Fragment [illegible] Segment [illegible] Unit [illegible] Component [illegible] Element [illegible] Factor [illegible] Aspect [illegible] Feature [illegible] Characteristic [illegible] Quality [illegible] Property [illegible] Attribute [illegible] Trait [illegible] Nature [illegible] Essence [illegible] Substance [illegible] Matter [illegible] Material [illegible] Stuff [illegible] Thing [illegible] Object [illegible] Item [illegible] Article [illegible] Piece [illegible] Unit [illegible] Specimen [illegible] Sample

tion between the Parent Teacher Association and the school administration.

A major problem that faces some of our administrators is that of having a true Parent Teacher Association. Sometimes it is an organization of parents only, just teachers, or even of just people. Sometimes a situation is found where members who have had children in school at a previous time, do not wish to relinquish their interest and insist upon running the association as they believe it should be. There is also the type of organization that is largely a parents' affair. Many teachers feel that at the end of the school day they have completed their share of work for the cause of education. Consequently they offer excuses of one sort of another why they should not attend the Parent Teacher Association. It is rarely found that an organization is largely dominated by the teachers, but such cases do exist and can be handled by tactful suggestions from the school administrator.

If lack of interest on the part of the teacher is the problem, something should be done to inspire the teachers by pointing out the advantages of a good Parent Teacher Association and making them aware of the need for cooperation on the part of the teachers.

A Parent Teacher Association dominated or influenced by people who do not have children in school can sometimes be a

very serious problem. Usually, individuals will not remain in the organization after their children are no longer in school, unless it is for personal gain or advantage. A problem of this type must be solved upon its own merits and in an individual way. A stereotyped solution is impractical.

A personal interview was held with a principal who in the past had constant friction with the officers of the Parent Teacher Association in his school. He believed that the trouble arose from the problem of the association trying to run the school. This, of course, is definitely not a function of the association and if a principal is to be responsible for his school, he must be able to make the decisions that he feels are necessary and beneficial to his school system. Since all human beings mistakes, it is not logical for one to be asked to answer for mistakes made by others.

Eighteen administrators feel that the Parent Teacher Association imposes upon the time of their teachers. This can very easily become a problem as teachers are quite often the ones who are most readily available when there is something that needs to be done. Frequently the teacher is reluctant to refuse the demands of the Parent Teacher Association for fear of gaining disfavor within the community. Quote often the teachers are best qualified to carry out special projects, especially in producing plays and other programs for the benefit of the organization.

The problem is often one that is individual in nature as many teachers feel they are imposed upon if they are asked to do anything outside of the classroom, while others are happy to do anything to further the cause of education.

Most administrators solve this problem by permitting the teachers who wish to work with programs or other necessary functions do so, and asking others only when there is no one else available. A good administrator will see to it that no one individual is unduly imposed upon.

Only six administrators feel that they have the problem of the Parent Teacher Association imposing upon the pupils' regular school time. When a principal has this problem it is probably his own fault and could most easily be solved through a school policy adopted by the faculty and then enforced by the principal.

There are a few cases where problems arise from the community itself. Occasionally one will find a community that is over organized; that is, it already has too many clubs or organizations in operation. In every community there are only a certain number of leaders who are capable of doing this type of work and if they are already spending their time in other organizations, the Parent Teacher Association probably would not be very successful.

A principal who has a school in such a community should not attempt to organize a Parent Teacher Association if there

is not one in operation. It would be much better to use the educational committees of the existing organizations, since most civic organizations have active educational committees. Most of the smaller communities are growing and it is better to wait until the community and the people are ready to initiate and take on the responsibility of a Parent Teacher Association.

A problem found in a few instances was the Parent Teacher Association stepping out of its sphere of influence, and attempting to regulate matters within the school. The administrators who were interviewed on this problem all seemed to have individual methods for solving it. One principal said, "I let them know right off where their jurisdiction ends and mine begins, after that we have peace and harmony." This may not be the best way, but is probably the most effective in securing immediate results. The other principals interviewed employed more tactful methods but advocated stopping the trouble early, or if possible, before it commenced.

The greatest problem faced by most of our administrators is a human problem--one that deals with individuals. Some members of the Parent Teacher Association are trouble makers, although they are ignorant of the harm they are doing; others who are members of the association solely for the personal gain they expect to receive, usually do far more harm than

they do good. The people referred to here are those who use petty politics to gain their own selfish ends. These same individuals often attempt to use their influence to gain what they consider the proper goals, which as Cubberley states, are "often unattainable and even undesirable."

This type of problem is very hard to combat because sometimes the activity is undercover and cannot be traced to any one person. This problem sometimes becomes so bad that such drastic action as the disbandment of the association is the only solution. However, such drastic steps as these are usually not necessary as a tactful principal, employing proper methods, can bring about a reorganization of the Parent Teacher Association so that it is brought up to its former standards as a useful tool in the field of education.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION AND THE SCHOOL

In the modern world in which we live, most people have learned the lesson that practically all progress is a matter of cooperation.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers was one of the first organizations to make use of the idea that fused and combined efforts could bring about miracles of achievement where individual efforts, no matter how earnest and devoted, would be doomed to failure.

In the education of children in the complex society in America, it is found that cooperation between the two most influential sources in the life of any child is not only desirable but essential. That which is taught to the child in school is the concern of every parent, and that which is being taught in the child's home is the concern of every conscientious teacher.

Cubberley believes that the work of the Parent Teacher Association is divided into two principle parts:

> "There are two main types of work which these associations may undertake with profit to the schools and to themselves. The first is in doing something needed by the school, and second is improving their own knowledge of school conditions and child needs by arranging meetings at which they will study or be

> told something of interest and value. . . . For the second type of activity there should be a group of topics of interest which can be taken up, which will lead to better information as to what should be done both for the children and for the school."[1]

The first type of work to which Cubberley refers seems to hold the greatest share of the activity being carried on by the Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County, as all of the Associations that were contacted contributed more to the financial and material needs of the school than any other purpose.

In most cases this is desirable, as the Parent Teacher Association provides a means for obtaining many articles that most school boards consider as the frills and fads of education. Such things as water coolers, film strips, movie machines, shrubs for the yard and many other items too numerous to mention might not be absolutely necessary to education, but such things do add to the enrichment and the betterment of the school as a whole.

Many Parent Teacher Associations can plan projects such as yard beautification or supplying the first aid room. These projects are best carried on by women and it is not necessary for them to be professional school people to be successful in carrying out these school functions. Most Parent Teacher

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1. E. P. Cubberley, The Principal and His School, p. 553.

Associations can do a great deal to forward the cause of education by being a money raising institution and supplying educational materials.

There are, of course, many more needs for Parent Teacher Associations besides those mentioned; however, the useful contributions of this organization would vary from community to community. There are several communities in which the Parent Teacher Association has raised the necessary funds to build and furnish lunchrooms.

The second type of activity to which Cubberley refers is the educational value to the parents. From the contacts made with the school, parents have discovered many valuable facts about learning. Many parents have found out that it is useless to teach a child until he is mentally mature enough to receive it.

Through this type of work, parents can appreciate the work being done by the school and why the school approaches its educational problems as it does. It has been learned that problems that arise between teachers and children can often be traced to the home or individual differences in children and that no one is really to blame.

Where study groups are organized, trained leaders should be supplied if at all possible. Study groups may vary from the simple discussion method, to the lecture, the symposium, the question box and the book review. These groups may be

supplied with an ever constant flow of material published by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. This material is planned specifically to implement the work of study groups.

No effort is ever spared by the National Congress to impress upon parents the necessity of always keeping in mind the idea of cooperation between school and home for the betterment of the child.

From this type of work the Parent Teacher Association has achieved recognizable success in bringing about a similarity in goals that are being attained both by the home and the school. They have achieved better relations between the classroom and the home and they have gone far to integrate family life with school life. Children often believe as their parents believe and since the Parent Teacher Association has raised the standards of thinking and of action in the home, it has also aided in bringing about a higher standard of working and thinking of the child at school.

The results of a survey conducted by the Committee on Cooperation of Home and School of the White House Conference, reveal that principals have less trouble with parents who belong to the Parent Teacher Association than with parents who do not belong. However, the school principals surveyed also felt that parents who were members expected more of the school, both for themselves and for their children, than did the non-

members. This is probably true because active members know more about what to expect from the school.

Many principals also feel that they seldom have any contact with parents who are non-members and that in most cases it is practically impossible to get the desirable cooperation from the parents if they do not belong to the Parent Teacher Association.

The school can expect from the Parent Teacher Association the aid and assistance which it is capable of giving. The work of the various associations will vary from community to community and will even vary from year to year as the abilities and progressiveness of the officers change from time to time.

The school expects the Parent Teacher Association to act as the medium for interpreting the work of the school to the local community. Sometimes the Parent Teacher Association works as an integrating agency to bring a closer union between the child's life at home, school, church, and the community.

The school can also expect the support of the Parent Teacher Association in worthwhile legislative matters. Many local units of this association have active legislative committees which write letters to congressmen and otherwise influence the passage of laws on the local, state, and national level. Throughout its history, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers has worked for the passage of laws to further the cause of education.

Of the seven questionnaires returned by the presidents of the Parent Teacher Associations, none stated that they had active legislative committees. One stated that they, as an organization, had taken a stand for or against certain issues. Another group planned to have an active committee in 1949 and 1950. From this information it seems that the legislative work of the Parent Teacher Association in Polk County is rather a haphazard affair.

The school also looks to the Parent Teacher Association to carry on a well-planned program that will fulfill both financial and educational needs. They can rightly expect a program that does not unjustly impose upon the school time of teachers or pupils. This situation seems to be handled very well in Polk County as only six administrators felt that their associations imposed upon pupils' time. However, eighteen out of forty-five administrators felt that their associations imposed upon teachers' time.

The Parent Teacher Association may also expect something in return from the school. They can justly expect the cooperation of the school administrator, teachers and pupils in their activities. The support and cooperation of the administration and the teachers as a group must be secured, or their efforts will be rather fruitless.

The Parent Teacher Association may justly expect helpful guidance from the administrator instead of dictation.

The association must also have the cooperation of the administration and faculty in attaining desired goals. The Parent Teacher Association may rightly look to the school to arrange its extra curricular activities so that conflicts and interferences may be cut to a minimum. The association enjoys having its work directed in such a manner so as not to overlap the work of other educational agencies.

# CHAPTER VII

## CONCLUSION AND FINAL APPRAISAL OF THE WORK OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS IN POLK COUNTY

The broad aim of the parent teacher movement is to develop a type of cooperation between schools, homes, churchez, and other community agencies, that will help to preserve the American way of life.

The future of democracy depends upon the extent to which children are led to develop individual and group attitudes and to apply the principles of truth and justice to the problems of all people.

Some of the homes in America today are still too ill equipped to make childrens' educational experiences in the home consistent with those in the school.

The Parent Teacher Association has an immediate function: offering a medium through which the philosophy and program of learning of the school may become available to all the people in the community.

The five major objectives of the parent-teacher movement are:

1. To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community.
2. To raise the standards of home life.
3. To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.

# Chapter Two

## Introduction and Statement of Purpose

### The Scope of the Study

The Junior College is rapidly becoming recognized as an important segment of education. Numerous studies, surveys, and books have been written, many still being written, concerning the Junior College and its place in education.

The College of Agriculture, Purdue University, has been engaged in a program of curriculum improvement and development in the Junior College of Agriculture and Technology for several years. This study is one of a series of studies being made in the College of Agriculture.

The purpose of this study is to determine the educational needs of the students in the Junior College of Agriculture and Technology, Purdue University, and to determine the extent to which these needs are being met by the curriculum.

The following major objectives of the study were established:

1. To determine the backgrounds, interests, and goals of the students.
2. To determine the educational needs of these students.
3. To determine the extent to which these needs are being met by the curriculum.

4. To bring into closer relation the home and the school that parents and teachers may co-operate intelligently in the training of the child.

5. To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

Since the development of the Parent Teacher Association, the policies and guiding principles of the movement have been determined by representatives of the whole membership rather than by a central group.

The purpose of the association is educational and does not seek to direct the technical activities of the schools or to control their policies.

The work of the Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County, Florida, appears to be on an average with the work of similar associations throughout the United States. Their activities are conducted in much the same manner as other associations. The same methods of raising funds are employed and the activities for their own enjoyment are quite similar to other associations. Most of the associations raise funds through plays, carnivals, suppers, socials, outside programs, May festivals, movies, contributions from members and occasionally a sales campaign that includes sales of greeting cards, magazines, and miscellaneous merchandise.

The work of the Parent Teacher Association in Polk County, could have been evaluated much more accurately if more than

seven of the officers in charge of the local units had co-operated in answering the questionnaires forwarded to them. However, if the other associations in Polk County measure up in any manner comparable to these seven organizations, it may be assumed that the work in this county is progressing very adequately. The response from school administrators was much more gratifying and far reaching as forty-eight of the fifty-nine questionnaires sent out were returned. These questionnaires give a broader view of the actual work of the Parent Teacher Association; however, this is solely the point of view from the side of the professional school worker.

It was found that all but four Polk County Parent Teacher Associations contributed financially to the school program. The failure of an association to contribute financially to the local school system was attributed to the fact that it was a newly organized association and as yet no funds had been raised other than regular dues. It was found that most associations contributed in some way to the health of the community, either through financial contributions, or by sponsoring first aid courses, cooking courses or other homemaking activities. The majority of the associations spent some money for parent education, or paid the expenses for one or more of their leaders to attend courses offered by the state. A few of the organizations aided character building in children by sponsoring guidance programs under school supervision, or by providing and

equipping playgrounds. They all strive in one way or another to make their community a better place for growing children to live in. The most important activities along this line are the campaign waged against undesirable comic books and movies, and a careful analysis of outside programs within the school.

Almost all of the associations perform a very definite service in sponsoring the summer round-up of pre-school children. They perform a dual purpose in this activity as:

(1) they serve the schools' need by making it an easier task to plan for the incoming first graders, and

(2) they further their own cause, as it brings them in contact with the parents who will become the replacements for those parents who may drop out because their children have completed school.

A very weak point in the work of the Parent Teacher Associations in Polk County is the little activity on the part of legislative committees. These committees could have a tremendous influence on the local, state and national law-making bodies. In the past, the Parent Teacher Association has been very active in the enactment of laws concerning child labor and for the general betterment of children. They have aided in the passage of many laws which are beneficial to the school and if these laws are to be retained on the statute books, the legislative committees of the various local organizations must remain active. Perfection has not yet been attained, and there is much improvement to be made

on all levels of legislation. The vicissitudes of the present times necessitate changes in the laws. If the parents desire certain laws to be passed, they must secure and maintain the unified efforts of the Parent Teachers Association.

A very popular project among Parent Teacher Associations is the equipping and the improvement of the school lunch room. A new project which has come into existence as a result of the extensive school building program throughout the nation, is that of beautifying the new school grounds. One association has acquired the services of a landscape artist and has collected several hundred plants and shrubs to decorate the grounds of the new school.

An overwhelming majority of the school administrators feel that the Parent Teacher Association in Polk County is performing a commendable job. Ninety percent of the administrators felt that they wanted to have a Parent Teacher Association in their school, to aid them in their work.

The majority of the administrators feel that the contributions of the Parent Teacher Association in the field of public relations certainly justifies their existence. They further feel that when the Parent Teacher Association stays within the bounds of its by-laws and works to obtain the ends to which its objects allude, their work for the betterment of education is indispensable.

Summary and Recommendations

The general trend of the activities of the national, state, county, and local Parent Teacher Associations may be summarized in a few brief statements.

1. The Parent Teacher Association was founded when the educational systems in the United States advanced to a place where there was a need for an organization of this type.

2. The Parent Teacher Association was organized by a group of mothers, statesmen, and professional educators, who believed in the betterment of the general welfare of children.

3. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers have advanced with the times in order that the local organizations might meet the vicissitudes in a changing world.

4. The Parent Teacher Association has proved its ability to gain and hold the interest of millions of parents and teachers throughout the United States and its possessions, as is evidenced by the great increase in membership and by the increasing number of projects that are being undertaken on a local, county, state and national level.

Nationally, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, backed by the various state and local organizations, has successfully conducted large legislative programs, especially those dealing with child labor. They have also carried on campaigns against obscene and unsuitable movies for children, certain types of comic books, and obscene literature. Each month in their magazine, the National Parent Teacher, they rate the new motion pictures that are produced so that parents may know what type of pictures their children are seeing.

The National Congress also provides study courses and sends trained teachers into the field where they are needed.

The Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers also publishes a magazine ten months of the year. They also provide short courses, usually at both state universities, to train local leaders in the work of the Parent Teacher Association.

The Polk County Council provides an organization where the work of the local units may be coordinated. They also help provide for local short courses in Parent-teacher work. They work as an encouraging force upon the local units and act as a clearing house for reports which are passed on to state and national headquarters.

The local Parent Teacher Association units provide financial assistance where needed in the local school program. They aid the school tremendously in the field of public relations, often providing a common ground for the settlement of differences that arise between the school and the general public.

Their aid in cementing the activities and the influences of both the school and home are invaluable. Thus the Parent Teacher Association has won its place as a vital cog in the machinery of American education.

It is quite obvious from the foregoing that the Parent Teacher Association does have a rightful place in the field of education and that each school center should be encouraged

to have its own local unit; that the associations now in operation are performing an indispensable service to the cause and betterment of education--a service that is filling the need on a national scale.

All legitimate interests of the child and the school are promoted by a right use of a parent teacher association. For the most effective use of the Parent Teacher Association, the following conditions should exist, or the following improvements be made:

1. Administrators should be allowed to guide and recommend courses of action.

2. That the Parent Teacher Associations should confine their work to activities prescribed in their by-laws.

3. That the legislative committees of the local Parent Teacher Associations become more active.

4. In most cases, the Parent Teacher Association should spend more funds for adult education and leadership training.

5. In instances where there is discord between the school administrators and the leaders or members of the Parent Teachers Association, every effort should be made to alleviate the situation so that each may operate at peak efficiency.

In cases where there is no local Parent Teacher Association, or where the old one has been deactivated, the following suggestions may prove helpful in organizing a very active unit, and in maintaining its interest:

1. Associations start effectively and properly with exhibitions of school work to which parents are invited.

2. From this association, parents are introduced intelligently into the school's problems.

3. Methods of instruction may be presented and special activities of the school explained.

4. Important phases of child life may be presented, thus helping the parent better to know his own child.

5. The importance of vocational guidance may be made clear to parents and children.

6. A school library may be started or augmented by the association.

7. School equipment may be improved by laying right foundations in parental intelligence and interest.

It would do well to remember that a clearer point of view by both parent and teacher sheds light on problems of school discipline and removes obstacles in the child's relations to school authorities. The Parent Teacher Association offers an organized scheme for the education of parents and will show much common ground between parent and teacher.

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# APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO PRINCIPALS
OF THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA

1. Do you have a Parent Teacher Association in your school?____

2. When are the meetings held?_____

3. Do you believe the work of the Parent Teacher Association is worth the effort in your school?_____

4. Do you feel at times that the Parent Teacher Association has a negative influence?_____

5. Do you ever feel that the Parent Teacher Association imposes upon the teachers' time?_____

6. Do you think the Parent Teacher Association imposes upon the pupils' regular school time?_____

7. Does your Parent Teacher Association sponsor field trips for students?_____

8. Does your Parent Teacher Association sponsor plays and programs and use students to raise funds for the organization?_____

9. Does your Parent Teacher Association contribute financially to your school program?_____

10. Does your Parent Teacher Association use students for their monthly entertainment programs?_____

11. To what extent do you believe the Parent Teacher Association to be a beneficial factor in the educational process?_____

12. Would you welcome your Parent Teacher Association sponsoring a students guidance service?_____

13. Do you sometimes feel that the Parent Teacher Association engages in petty politics?_____

14. Remarks?_____

TABLE I

Answers to questions that could be answered Yes or No on the Questionnaires sent to the Principals of the Public Schools in Polk County, Florida

| No. | Question | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Do you have a Parent Teacher Association in your school? | 43 | 3 |
| 3. | Do you believe the work of the P.T.A. is worth the effort in your school? | 40 | 4 |
| 4. | Do you feel at times that the P.T.A. has a negative influence? | 13 | 33 |
| 5. | Do you feel at times that the P.T.A. imposes on the teachers' time? | 18 | 28 |
| 6. | Do you ever feel that the Parent Teachers Association imposes upon the pupils' regular school time? | 6 | 39 |
| 7. | Does your P.T.A. sponsor field trips for children? | 4 | 39 |
| 8. | Does your P.T.A. sponsor plays and programs and use students to raise funds for the organization? | 22 | 25 |
| 9. | Does your P.T.A. contribute financially to your school program? | 38 | 5 |
| 10. | Does your P.T.A. use students for their monthly entertainment programs? | 30 | 10 |
| 12. | Would you welcome your P.T.A. sponsoring a student guidance service? | 16 | 27 |
| 13. | Do you sometimes feel that the Parent Teacher Association engages in petty politics? | 27 | 20 |

Note: Questions Numbers 2, 11 and 14 could not be answered in the affirmative or negative.

QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO THE PRESIDENT
OF EACH
PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION IN POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA

1. When was your Parent Teacher Association organized?_____

2. How many active members do you have?_____

3. What percentage of increase did you have this year?_____

4. How many usually attend the regular meetings?_____

5. How do you raise operational funds? (check)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Plays | _____ | Outside programs | _____ |
| Rummage sales | _____ | Carnivals | _____ |
| Sales campaigns | _____ | Suppers and Socials | _____ |
| Other means | _____ | | |

6. Does your Parent Teacher Association sponsor a family life council?_____

7. Do you spend any money for training lay leaders to conduct parent education groups?_____

8. Do you have a counciling and guidance service for children?__

9. Do you spend any money to promote health in your community?__

10. Does your group budget regularly for parent education?_____

11. Does your organization ever sponsor field trips for students?
_____

12. Does your association contribute financially to the school program?_____

13. Does your organization have an active legislative committee?_

14. Does your Parent Teacher Association strive to make your community a good place for growing children?_____

15. Does your organization do anything specific to add character building in children?_____ If so what?_____

16. Does your association plan their programs on an annual basis?
_____

17. What is the most outstanding project your association has completed or is in the process of completing?_____
Explain briefly:_____

18. Do you have any projects that take more than one year to accomplish?_____

TABLE II

Answers to questions that could be answered Yes or No on the Questionnaires sent to the President of each Parent Teacher Association in Polk County, Florida

| No. | Question | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | Does your Parent Teacher Association sponsor a family life council? | 0 | 7 |
| 7. | Do you spend any money for training lay leaders to conduct parent education groups? | 2 | 5 |
| 8. | Do you have a counciling and guidance service for children? | 2 | 4 |
| 9. | Do you spend any money to promote health in your community? | 3 | 2 |
| 10. | Does your group budget regularly for parent education? | 2 | 5 |
| 11. | Does your organization ever sponsor field trips for students/ | 0 | 7 |
| 12. | Does your association contribute financially to the school program? | 6 | 1 |
| 13. | Does your organization have an active legislative committee? | 0 | 7 |
| 14. | Does your Parent Teacher Association strive to make your community a good place for growing children? | 7 | 1 |
| 16. | Does your association plan their programs on an annual basis? | 8 | 0 |
| 18. | Do you have any projects that take more than one year to accomplish? | 4 | 4 |

Note: Questions Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 15 and 17 could not be answered in the affirmative or negative.